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SLAVERY

By J. T. GIBBS.

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J. T. GIBBS

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SLAVERY

SLAVERY was introduced into the Jamestown Colony in 1619 by the Commander of a Dutch trading vessel, who sold twenty negroes to the settlers. They were useful in the cultivation of tobacco and their labor increased the production of that plant.

**Introduc-
tion.**

During the early colonial period slavery existed in all the colonies. In the north slaves were used chiefly as house servants, while in the south they worked on the plantations, doing practically all the work of the farm. Slavery was not profitable in the north and was gradually abolished there.

**In all the
Colonies.**

The invention of the Cotton Gin by Ely Whitney in 1793 greatly increased the profits of slave labor.

With this machine three men could extract the seeds from 1000 pounds of cotton in a day, while by hand one able-bodied man could pick but one pound in a day.

**The Cot-
ton Gin.**

By a provision of the Ordinance of 1787
Ordinance of 1787. Slavery was prohibited in the Northwest Territory forever.

The Constitution of the United States provided, in Article I., Section IX., Clause 1, that the importation of slaves into the United States could
In the Constitution. not be prohibited prior to the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eight.

Early in the constitutional period, the country divided into two sections on the Slavery Question, the South favoring and the North opposing it.
Country Divided. By this time Slavery, being unprofitable in the North, had gradually died out in that section and existed only south of the Mason and Dixon Line.

Whenever the question of admitting a new state came up in Congress, each of these sections studied the situation carefully to determine whether the admission of that particular state would be to its disadvantage.

Thus when Ohio was admitted, in 1803, it came in as a free state by the provision of the Ordinance of 1787, and the southern section, thinking that the northern free states were getting too numerous and too powerful and might some day out-vote them on

all questions that might arise in Congress, demanded the admission of Louisiana, a southern, slave state, which was admitted in 1812. Then followed Indiana, free, in 1816; Mississippi, slave, in 1817; Illinois, free, in 1818; Alabama, slave, in 1819; and Maine, free, in 1820. This about preserved the relative strength of the two sections.

When Missouri applied for admission to the Union a violent discussion arose as to whether it should come in as a free or a slave state. The **The Mis-** proposed state was more northern than **souri Com-** southern in geographical location, but the **promise.** people of the proposed state favored slavery, and the southern section claimed it was their turn to have a state admitted favorable to their views on the Slavery Question—the last previous state admitted (Maine) being a free state.

This controversy was settled by a bill in Congress proposed by Henry Clay. This bill was known as the Missouri Compromise. By its provisions Missouri was to be admitted as a slave state, but Slavery was to be forever prohibited in the other territory west of the Mississippi River and north of the line of 36 degrees and 30 minutes north latitude, the southern boundary line of Missouri.

The bill became a law in 1820 and Missouri was admitted as a slave state in 1821.

There were persons in the colonies who thought Slavery to be wrong and that it should be abolished.

Sentiment The framers of the famous Ordinance of
Against 1787 recognized the evil of Slavery and in
Slavery. the provisions for the organization of the Northwest Territory they forbade Slavery there or in the states to be formed from that territory.

The framers of the Constitution recognized that the Slavery question was a much discussed subject and that sooner or later the opposition to the system would crystallize in an effort to abolish Slavery and the slave trade. They provided in Article I, Section IX, Clause 1, that the slave trade could not be abolished before the year 1808.

Washington kept slaves, and one of the provisions of his will was that after his death his slaves should be free.

In 1807 England prohibited the Slave trade in that country. The matter was much talked about in this country, and approved by many, and the
England
Abolishes slave trade was abolished in this country
Slave trade soon after. This with the repeated discussions that arose upon the admission of states during

Madison's and Monroe's terms of the Presidency, brought the people up to fever heat. It was just at this time that Clay's Missouri Compromise quelled the excitement. Many persons believed the matter permanently settled.

When Abraham Lincoln was about 18 or 19 years of age he, with a companion, went down the Ohio River and the Mississippi River to New Orleans with a raft loaded with produce for sale. It was his first visit to that city and he was much interested in everything he saw while there.

One day he and his companion were passing along the street when their attention was attracted by the sound of the voice of an auctioneer. Joining the crowd that had gathered on the street, they soon learned that an auction sale of slaves was in progress. A negro family was being sold, some of the members to be taken to one place and some to another.

Lincoln and his companion did not remain long near the disagreeable scene. As they walked away, Lincoln was particularly quiet for some time, when he said to his companion, "If I ever get a chance to hit slavery, I'm going to hit it hard."

During the period that followed the enactment of the Missouri Compromise, many able writers wrote

**In
Literature**

upon the evils of slavery, and many preachers and other public speakers told their hearers that the evil should be abolished.

Pamphlets were printed and circulated urging the abolition of slavery. Able editorial writers in both the secular and the religious press kept the minds of the people agitated with the horrors and the injustice of slavery.

One of these was Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, editor of the "Observer", a religious paper published in St. Louis. Having more or less trouble with his publication in St. Louis, which was in a slave state, he decided to remove to a free state and located at Alton, Illinois. Here the pro-slavery element were very bitter against him and his work. His printing press was destroyed, and he secured another. This was destroyed and another secured. The third press was destroyed and the fourth secured.

The question now seemed to be the right of free speech and a free press and the people divided into two classes, the one defending Lovejoy's right to print his views and the other determined to prevent the publication of his paper because it was hurting slavery. They thought that by obstructing Lovejoy

and ruining him financially they would over-awe any other persons who might want to publish anti-slavery literature.

Lovejoy and his friends decided to defend this fourth press and in doing so, Lovejoy was shot and killed by a mob which destroyed the press on the night of November 8, 1837.

The news of the murder of Lovejoy spread very rapidly over the country and aroused the bitterest antagonism of the anti-slavery people against those responsible for the crime. Instead of over-aweing the opponents of slavery, it made them more bold. Even the pro-slavery element of the south recognized that the matter had been carried too far.

Lovejoy was considered a martyr to the cause of a free press, and an elegant monument has since been erected in Alton to his memory.

While Illinois was still a territory the pro-slavery element of the country made several attempts to have the provisions of the Ordinance of 1787 changed so that when the territory was admitted to statehood it could be admitted as a slave state. James Madison prevented the change in the Ordinance of 1787.

**In
Illinois**

After Illinois was admitted to the Union as a state

an effort was made to change the constitution, which had been formed along the line of the provisions of the Ordinance of 1787, so that slavery could be introduced.

While Edward Coles was Governor of the state, the legislature, which had a majority of members favoring slavery, submitted to a vote of the people a proposition to so change the constitution.

The campaign was long and hotly contested. Gov. Coles was bitterly opposed to slavery and gave his salary for four years (\$4000.00) to defeat the proposed amendment. When the result of the election was learned it was found that the anti-slavery element had won by a majority of about 1800.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin", a pathetic story of slave life and treatment.

**Uncle
Tom's
Cabin** It produced a marked effect upon the sentiment of the country, and, especially, of the north, concerning slavery. The first edition was printed in 1852. The book is still on the market.

Many plantation melodies were written, some of which have survived to the present time. Stephan C. Foster's "Suwanee River", "Massa's In the Cold, Cold Ground" and "My Old Kentucky Home", will

likely live for ages to come, while B. R. Hanby's "Darling Nellie Gray" is still a favorite. It expresses the deepest pathos in the line, "They have taken her to Georgia for to wear her life away." These are only a few of the many things in literature that kept the subject of slavery before the people.

The south did not want the Slavery question agitated so much, for they saw that sentiment was against them. But since the assassination of Lovejoy men boldly printed their thoughts.

The Slavery question had as much as anything else to do with the defeat of Henry Clay for the presidency of the United States. He was nomi-

**Defeats
Clay**

inated for president by the Whigs in 1844.

The democrats nominated James K. Polk.

One of the chief issues of the campaign was the proposed annexation of Texas, an independent republic

that had asked to be admitted into the Un-

**Annexation
of Texas**

ion as a state. The democrats favored the

annexation for it would increase the number of slave states. The Whigs, most of whom lived in the north, opposed the annexation because it might give too much power to the slave states. Polk was elected and Texas was admitted as a slave state.

Charles Dickens, the celebrated English novelist,

made a tour of the United States in 1842, coming as far west as St. Louis. He made copious notes upon his experiences and observations. These he later compiled in a book called "American Notes", which was published and widely circulated. In this he makes considerable sport of many things he observed during his sojourn.

While in the city of Washington, he visited the capitol. One of the many things that interested him here was a large engraved copy of the Declaration of Independence that hung upon the wall of one of the rooms. He inspected the prized document closely, admiring the humane thoughts Mr. Jefferson and others had put into it. He read that declaration that says that "all men are created free and equal", and then he "roasted" us soundly for allowing slavery to exist. He laid special emphasis on the slave traffic being carried on in the District of Columbia, almost under that declaration.

No doubt this criticism was partially responsible for the 4th provision of the Omnibus Bill, which prohibited traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia.

In 1846, David Wilmot, a member of congress from Pennsylvania, introduced a bill into congress which was known as the Wilmot Proviso. By its

**Wilmot
Proviso**

provisions slavery was to be prohibited in the territory which should be acquired from Mexico in the war about to begin and all other territory that should be acquired. This bill never became a law, but was the subject of much bitter discussion in all parts of the country, and helped to widen the breach between the north and the south.

**Omnibus
Bill**

Following our successful war against Mexico, which had been brought on because of a mis-understanding as to the boundary line between Texas and Mexico we acquired a vast amount of territory extending to the Pacific Coast. Gold had been discovered in California and the state settled up very rapidly. When the question of admitting California to the Union arose, the whole Slavery subject was re-opened. The discussion became very bitter. Henry Clay, who by his compromising attitude upon this and other public questions won the sobriquet of "The Great Pacificator", put forward the famous Omnibus Bill, or Compromise of 1850. It provided:

1st. That California should come in as a free state.

2nd. That Utah and New Mexico should be organized without any reference to the slavery question.

3rd. That Texas should be paid \$10,000,000 to give up her claim on New Mexico.

4th. That the buying and selling of slaves should be prohibited in the District of Columbia, and

5th. That a fugitive slave law should be enacted providing for the return of runaway slaves to their owners.

When it was proposed to organize the territories of Kansas and Nebraska the bitterness of the Slavery question burst forth again with renewed **Kansas- Nebraska Bill** fury. Stephan A. Douglas, United States Senator from Illinois, introduced his famous bill advocating the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty", i. e., that the inhabitants of a territory should have the right to decide for themselves whether the proposed state should be free or slave. This bill became a law in 1854 and was practically a repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

The struggle was now transferred from Congress to Kansas, to the relief of the Congressmen, but to the great detriment of the people of Kansas. **Border Warfare** A cruel "Border Warfare", lasting four years blighted the state's progress.

Dred Scott was a negro slave. His master, an army officer, took him from Missouri, a slave state,

Dred Scott Decision first to Illinois and later to Minnesota. He believed that because he had been taken into free territory that he should have his freedom. The case was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States for decision. In an opinion handed down by Chief Justice Taney, the Supreme Court denied Dred Scott his freedom and declared that a slave owner might take his slaves into free territory without forfeiting any of his rights to them.

This decision re-opened the whole slavery discussion in its bitterest form. It made all the states slave states; if the slave owner had first acquired title to slaves in a slave state, he might take them to any free state and hold them as slaves. The south rejoiced over the decision, but the feeling of disappointment and disgust in the north was very great.

Fugitive Slave Law The Fugitive Slave Law, providing for the return of slaves, escaping to the free states, to their owners in the slave states, passed according to a provision of the Omnibus Bill, proved very unpopular at the north. Many of the free states passed Personal Liberty Bills, guaranteeing to run-away slaves the right of trial by jury before they could be re-taken to slave territory.

Many serious northern people wanted to help the

negro, and the recent acts and decisions being mostly against them, they obeyed their consciences rather than the Fugitive Slave Law, and **“Under-ground Railway”** helped many run-away slaves to get across the country to Canada, where they would be free by the English law. This system of help was known as the **“Underground Railway.”** The south complained very bitterly because of it.

The celebrated Lincoln-Douglas Debates occurred in Illinois in the campaign of 1858. During these debates Mr. Lincoln succeeded in getting **Lincoln-Douglas Debates** Mr. Douglas to so express himself that, while Illinois was pleased with him and re-elected him to the United States Senate, the south was not satisfied with his position on the Slavery question. In 1860 the Charleston Democratic Convention refused to nominate Douglas for the Presidency; the convention divided, the northern wing of the party went to Baltimore and nominated Douglas; the southern wing later met in Baltimore and named John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, as their candidate. The Republicans met in Chicago and nominated Abraham Lincoln, whose slavery views were very distasteful to the south.

Lincoln was elected and thus the Slavery question

had kept another good man—Douglas—from becoming President as it had done Clay. The south could not stand the election of Lincoln and secession and war followed.

John Brown, of Osawatomie, Kansas, who had taken part in the four years' "Border Warfare" in Kansas, burned with a desire to free the slaves. He and twenty companions seized the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in 1859, and declared all the slaves free, expecting that the slaves, themselves, would rise against their masters and support Brown and his raiders. They did not. John Brown was arrested by Col. Robert E. Lee, charged with treason, convicted and hanged. "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave" became part of a song that was sung all over the north during the civil war.

While there were a number of causes that led to the Civil War, it is certain that the Slavery question, with the many bitter discussions it engendered, was among the most important.

Most of the slave-holding states seceded from the Union and President Lincoln undertook to maintain the Union by force of arms.

It was during the war, when General Robert E.

Lee, the daring southern leader, was driven back from his invasion of Maryland, in the battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862), that Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation, effective January 1, 1863, declaring that the slaves in states or parts of states in open rebellion against the United States should be free.

Of this proclamation Lincoln said, "I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee was driven back from Maryland I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves."

There is no doubt that the slavery question was almost entirely responsible for the assassination of Lincoln.

The abolition of Slavery was accomplished by the ratification of the XIII Amendment to the constitution of the United States. And thus a question that caused three quarters of a century of strife, four years of cruel war and cost millions of dollars was settled for all time.





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